

The **NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY** is the central fire service agency in the State and is responsible for the development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, public fire safety education programs and firefighter training programs. It is housed within the State's Department of Community Affairs.

For more information on fire safety, visit the Division's Web site at:

**[www.nj.gov/dca/dfs](http://www.nj.gov/dca/dfs)**

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**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**



# Teaching **ENERGETIC** Children *about Fire Safety*



**James E. McGreevey**  
*Governor  
State of  
New Jersey*



**Susan Bass Levin**  
*Commissioner  
Department of  
Community Affairs*

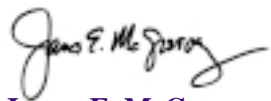


**Lawrence Petrillo**  
*State Fire Marshal  
and Director  
Division of Fire Safety*

*Greetings from  
Governor McGreevey, Commissioner Levin,  
and Fire Marshal Petrillo*

As your children grown, their boundless energy and natural curiosity about fire could lead them to conduct some experiments on their own and possibly take some dangerous risks without thinking things through, particularly in the absence of adult supervision. As a parent, you can help minimize the risks your child might take by eliminating situations which could be hazardous to children too young to understand basic safety concepts. As they develop to the point where they do become capable of understanding fire safety, you should set aside time to teach them about the consequences and potential dangers of fire. We want to ensure that you and your family are as safe as possible and aware of the hazards presented by the possibility of accidental fires.

With all good wishes,



**James E. McGreevey**  
*Governor*



**Susan Bass Levin**  
*Commissioner*



**Lawrence Petrillo**  
*State Fire Marshal*

**PROVIDE YOUR CHILDREN WITH BASIC  
FIRE SAFETY INSTRUCTION!**

Children under the age of 5 make up only 7% of the American population, but account for 23% of the country's fire deaths. Children usually do not understand what fire is capable of doing, or how quickly a fire can rage out of control. At the youngest age possible, teach your children that matches and cigarette lighters are not toys to be played with, but tools to be used only by adults for acceptable purposes. Teach them about the legitimate uses of fire - for cooking, heating the home, barbecuing outdoors, etc. Teach them also that fire can be harmful, but be sure to do it in a way that is appropriate for their level of understanding. When they are ready, teach them to bring any matches or lighters they find to an adult.

**NEVER ASSUME YOUR CHILDREN WON'T  
DO SOMETHING DANGEROUS.** Children have a natural sense of curiosity, but they don't always realize the dangers associated with their actions.

**HELP YOUR CHILDREN THINK THROUGH  
CONSEQUENCES.** Teach them what is safe and what is not safe. For example, explain exactly why it is unsafe for a child to play with matches in his or her home; how certain surfaces could be hot enough to cause a burn if they are touched; or how contact with electrical wiring or appliances could cause a severe shock.

**BE A SAFETY INSPECTOR.** Take precautions before your children start playing. Inspect their play areas, and place restrictions on the areas where they can go without adult supervision - areas like the kitchen when food is cooking, or the bathroom when hot water is running. Inspect play areas not only for matches and lighters, but also for possible hazards from electrical outlets, electrical power cords, etc.

**IF YOUR CHILD DOES GET HURT,** treat the injury first, then review the actions that led to the injury. Use discipline if necessary. Because the injury may have already helped the child learn the consequences of his or her actions, it may not be necessary to impose a severe penalty. If your child did something that was dangerous but was not hurt, explain what could have happened because of careless behavior.

**DON'T FORGET TO PRAISE!**

Congratulate your children when they make correct decisions while playing. Positive encouragement helps build self-confidence. The more self-confidence your children have, the less likely they will be to fall prey to pressure from peers - now or in the years to come.

